

PAUL'S SOLEMN PLEA TO ROME

INTRODUCTION

A. Aim: To herald Paul's solemn plea and message to the church in Rome, to mark and turn away from those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine they had heard, learned, believed, and obeyed according to "The faith, once delivered to the saints."

B. Pro: To establish that such a plea is vital to the church of Christ today. His plea was *to mark* and *turn away* from them who:

C. Text: Romans 16:17-19

D. Outline.

1. Causes Divisions and Offenses
2. Serves not the Lord Jesus Christ
3. Deceives the Hearts of the Simple

E. Introductory Remarks.

1. Today's lesson will present the message: "Paul's Solemn Plea To Rome." This was an urgent and solemn plea from the beloved apostle Paul to the saints at Rome. His message began with a sincere plea to the brethren faithful to the Lord and part of the body of believers in the church in Rome. This solemn plea is given to the faithful saints: to mark and turn away from those *causing divisions and offenses* in the body of Christ. These are those who serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their (own) bellies and are making merchandise of babes, the unlearned, unsuspecting, and innocent. Nothing is more important to the church of Christ than to warn her of this solemn message of Paul and all the other apostles.

2. First, we will consider Paul's concern regarding those who cause divisions and offenses in the body of Christ. The apostle begins this solemn plea with his softest word: "Brethren, I beseech you, not command you." We, like Paul, understand that though we have the authority to demand, it serves best when we humbly ask, pray, or beg in the "name of Jesus Christ" for the saints to be persuaded rather than directed. Some military men, like myself, struggled with this after giving and receiving "orders" for decades. It took my wife to help me in this area of communication. Paul's solemn plea included two things: 1) to mark them and 2) to turn away from them: "who cause divisions and offenses within the body of Christ," Romans 16:17.

3. Second, we will discuss that those who now trouble the church serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their bellies. They were troubling the church with divisions and offenses. We will learn that Paul speaks of the Jewish fathers and those of the circumcision. They were teaching the Gentiles that they could not be part of the church family without first obeying the Law and being circumcised to become proselytes of Judaism. They were messengers of the evil one and were not the servants of the Lord but "greedy for filthy lucre," Titus 1:11-12. Finally, he asked the church to pray that the saints of Jerusalem and Judaea might accept his work in delivering the money from the Gentile churches and that he could be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.

4. Lastly, we will investigate what the apostle meant when he wrote: "And by kind speaking and praise deceive the hearts of the innocent," Romans 16:18b. This sentence outlines the hearts and minds of those who not only preach and teach something other than sound doctrine. But it also includes the hearts and minds of those who will be "beguiled and wholly deceived" by their good words and fair speeches. Paul refers to them as "the innocent and deceived" because they were ignorant and unlearned regarding the "faith of the gospel" and were deceived, and their destruction and damnation were standing at the door. Paul warned them and us that: "Every sin and disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward," Hebrews 2:1-2. God's judgment will be fair and final!

BODY OF LESSON

I THAT CAUSES DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES

A. Now I beseech you, brethren: “*Mark them* that cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine that you have learned, and *avoid them*,” Romans 16:17.

NOTE: The EGNT reads: “But I exhort (urge) you, brethren, to consider those who make the divisions and the offenses, and *turn away* from them,” Page 435. He encouraged them to *consider* and *turn away* from them (those) who cause, encourage, or commit divisive behaviors.

1. Paul’s acclamations. After the apostle had given sincere compliments to all those saints in Rome, he turned his attention to the evils of those who would cause divisions and offenses among them. He begins,

2. With a solemn plea. “Now I beseech you, brethren.” He does not demand or command such to these saints. He warns and urges them to do these things as an apostle because: “That which comes upon him daily, the care of all the churches,” 2 Corinthians 11:28. Nothing is more attractive to the evil one and his disciples than their assaults, temptations, and divisive works against, unto, and within the church of the Lord. Especially when,

a. Fruit-bearing congregations are busy *doing the Lord’s work* and *growing in numbers* and *(the) faith of the gospel*.

b. Its ministers are “doing the work of an evangelist.” Like Timothy and Archippus, whom he wrote,

1) To Timothy, “But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry,” 2 Timothy 4:5.

2) And to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it,” Colossians 4:17.

3) My sons, continue the ministry’s work and do not turn away from “preaching the sound word to strengthen the saints” in all good things. Guard thyself and the church from “evil men and seducers that wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived,” 2 Timothy 3:13.

c. A church’s leadership team is committed to “Equipping the saints into the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ,” Ephesians 4:11-12.

d. The whole congregation is dedicated to winning souls for Christ.

3. He wrote: “I beseech you, brethren.” The word beseech in Gr., is *parakaleō*, which means to call for, comfort, desire, appeal, and intreat through prayer. The Greek word also means: “to call to one’s side, call for, to beg or entreat (plead) earnestly,” Romans 12:1-2; Romans 15:30-33.

4. You brethren. Paul uses the word brethren in Gr., is *adelphos*, which means one born from the same womb. Recall, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” Galatians 3:28-29.

5. Born from the same womb. Christians are born from the Gr., “*ek*,” or “*out of*” the same womb: “The water and of the Spirit,” John 3:3; John 3:5. If the Lord says so (LSS), we will discuss this process in the invitation. Paul now directs what the saints do with those that cause divisions and offenses.

B. Paul commands that the church must “mark them.” Let’s consider what the apostle means in this term. Observe,

1. The word mark in Gr., is *skopeō*, which means to “aim at (set or fix one’s eyes on), to regard, consider, take heed, look at (on), mark or identify.” Paul uses the word “mark” as *to follow* or as *to avoid*. Notice,

a. In Romans 16:17, he penned: “*Mark* (consider) to *turn away* from them, not to follow, or permit their teachings, which are contrary to the (sound) doctrine.”

b. In Philippians 3:17, he inscribed: “Brethren, be followers together of me, *and mark* (consider) them which walk so as you *have us* for an ensample.”

c. What is the “sound doctrine?” He beseeched Corinth: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there are no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,” 1 Corinthians 1:10.

d. He wrote Philippi: “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if anything, you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the *same rule* and mind the *same things*,” Philippians 3:15-16. Paul had to point out and correct the Corinthians’ abuse of the Lord’s Table. Notice,

2. The apostle wrote to Corinth: “Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse. First, when you come together in (as) the church, I hear *you have divisions*, and I partly believe it. For there must also *be heresies* among you, that they which *are approved* may be made manifest (*known*) among you,” 1 Corinthians 11:17-19.

a. The word divisions in Gr., is *schisma*, which means “a split or gap, a division (‘schism’), a rent or to shred.” Other words that describe this behavior are “splintered, fragmented, or shattered.” These words, by themselves, warn us of problems that will destroy the work of Christ. We must never allow any man: “Through covetousness with feigned words to make merchandise of the church, whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, for their sin lieth at the door,” 2 Peter 2:1-3; Genises 4:7. God will judge such men and women, they shall not escape the judgment seat of Christ,” Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11.

b. The schisma or heresies troubling the church at Corinth was their “abuse of the Lord’s table,” 1 Corinthians 11:16-17; 21. In a religious sense, it refers to a diversion from what one was taught to be sound doctrine to a different idea, teaching, or religious practice.

DEFINITION: “A schismatic is a person who creates or incites *a schism* in an organization or is a member of *a splinter group*. Schismatic as an adjective means pertaining to a schism or schisms, or to those ideas, policies, (practices), etc., that are thought to lead towards or promote schism (division).” Wikipedia, Schism. See References below. This might include a division between people, teaching, parties, or groups seeking to deceive or mislead other members for political or religious reasons. [Sound familiar?] As you well know,

1) We live in a time when disinformation, misinformation, and false information are perceived and believed to be “the truth.” These divisive and corrupt messages are sown to deceive and mislead others and distract them from the truth they seek to distort.

2) A religious or any other society that no longer seeks truth but instead promotes lies can never be expected to do what is right in the sight of God, the world, or the church.

3) The church of Christ must be a beacon of truth and hope for the world. It is yet “a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden,” Matthew 5:14.

4) The church must expose and correct errors and divisions whenever they occur. It cannot be silent but speak out against them in love and with the word of God. So, we might preserve the faithful and call those seeking “the truth” into the light of Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:5-7.

c. The New Testament addresses such men as heretics. Paul wrote: “But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man (or a woman) that is an (heretick) or a schismatic: after the first and second admonition reject (turn away from); knowing that he, (or she) that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (or herself),” Titus 3:9-11. (Inclusions are mine). Such a person is self-condemned!

3. Paul mentions another thing in this warning: offenses. In Gr., the word offense is *skandalon*, or *skandalon* (“scandal”), from which we get our English word “scandal.” The idea is to place a trap or

snare in one's way to cause them to error or sin. Christians are charged not to put "a stumbling block in their brother or sister's way, so not to cause them to offend or sin." Paul wrote,

a. First, to Rome: "Let us not, therefore, judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way," Romans 14:13; Romans 14:21-23.

ILLUSTRATE: Christ a "stumblingblock to Israel," Romans 9:32-33; Romans 11:9; Isaiah 28:16.

b. Further, to Corinth: "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak...Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend," 1 Corinthians 8:9-13. [Text shortened for brevity].

Peter also wrote of Israel's offense,

c. Finally, to the scattered Jews: "Unto you therefore, which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But you are a chosen generation...into His marvelous light," 1 Peter 2:7-9. [Text shortened for brevity].

1) Peter also quotes this text in his discourse after healing the lame man in Acts 4:10-12.

2) This quotation refers to David's prophecy regarding the Jews' rejection of Jesus, Psalms 118:22-23.

d. The Lord in His parable of "the householder" unto the chief priests and the elders of the people who questioned His authority while teaching in the Temple, Matthew 21:23-41. Jesus refers to this prophecy in Matthew 21:42-45. Observe,

NOTE: The chief priests and elders questioned Jesus on His doctrine being preached unto the people. The Master responded: "If you answer my question, I will likewise answer yours. He asked: "Was the baptism of John from heaven or men?" They went aside to analyze His question and, after some debate, returned and said: "We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things," Matthew 21:23-27. Jesus knew these leaders' hearts. As they rejected John's baptism, they would in like manner reject "the baptism of Christ," which His apostles would later preach beginning on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:38-41.

4. Conclusion: Paul's first plea was to mark those who cause divisions and offenses. This mark was not made with evil intent but to identify those possessing such a spirit and behavior. The church should be advised of such a person(s) so they may guard themselves against schismatic (rhetoric) and false teachings. At the end of point 1, we'll discuss Paul's plea: "To turn away from them."

C. Luke wrote of the early church: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread (communion), and in prayers," Acts 2:42.

1. The early church followed the apostles' doctrine. They earnestly continued in the apostles' doctrine, teaching, fellowship (giving), communion (the Lord's Supper), and prayers. They were instructed, learned, and commanded to follow the apostles' doctrine in obedience to the faith, evangelism, and worship of God. This pattern is described as,

2. The doctrine of Christ. John wrote: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath (both) the Father and the Son," 2 John 1:9. Notice John's pronouncement,

a. Those who abide in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son.

b. Those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ, transgresseth (sin) and hath not God.

c. The Lord knows "those that are His, and they abide in His doctrine," John 10:27-30; John 18:37-38.

d. Those that "name the name of Christ departs from iniquity," 2 Timothy 2:19.

3. The *common* faith. Paul wrote: "To Titus, mine own son after the *common faith*: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus 1:4.

4. The *common* salvation. Jude indited: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the *common salvation*, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort that you should earnestly *contend for the faith* which was once delivered unto the saints," Jude 1:3.

5. Conclusion: True believers of the apostles' doctrine "had all things *in common*," Acts 2:44; Acts 4:32. The faith of God's elect was considered: "*common*, unclean and defiled by the Jewish leaders and people." This is the same word Peter used to describe *his abstinence* from "certain meats" because they were considered "*common* or unclean, even as the Gentiles," Acts 10:14; Acts 11:8.

a. God has made what was considered "common and unclean" – or the Gentiles part of the body of Christ, Acts 10:28. Peter was told: "What God hath cleansed, call thou not common nor unclean," Acts 10:15. Peter's revelation: "God hath *shewed me* that I should not call any man common or unclean," Acts 10:28. God hath cleansed both the Jews and the Gentiles through their "faith and obedience to the gospel," thus "by (*the*) *faith* having purified their hearts," Acts 15:9. The *definite article* is part of the Greek but was not translated, EGNT, page 358. Therefore,

b. They, who were once unclean, are now clean and part of "*the faith* of God's elect," Titus 1:1-3.

c. Only to the "unclean and defiled" are the things sanctified by God considered "unclean and defiled," Titus 1:15; Romans 14:14. Paul continued,

D. Which you have learned. Paul wrote much of "the sound doctrine." He wrote: "If any man thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord," 1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 Corinthians 7:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2. Observe,

1. The sound doctrine. The doctrine of the church is called "sound doctrine." Healthy teaching!

a. Paul reminds Timothy, his son in the faith:

1) First, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightiest charge some that they *teach no other doctrine*," 1 Timothy 1:3. Again, he charges Timothy.

2) Further, "Hold fast the form of *sound words*, which thou hast learned of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Timothy 1:13. He continues his directives,

3) Next, to Timothy, "But continue thou in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them: And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which can make thee wise unto salvation *through (the) faith* which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God...unto all good works," 2 Timothy 3:14-17. [Text shortened for brevity]. He concludes,

4) Finally, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," 2 Timothy 2:2. Timothy, remember the things given unto you from me, and many witnesses: and commit them to faithful men, who are competent to teach others also, to be faithful in discharging their duties: "in preaching and teaching the sound doctrine," 2 Timothy 4:5; Colossians 4:17-18. Similarly,

b. Paul admonishes Titus, that he:

1) First, should: "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine," Titus 2:1. Speak the things given you through the Old Testament Scriptures and the words I have imparted unto you. So, all believers might be built up in "the most holy faith," Jude 1:20, 1 Timothy 1:4, and Colossians 2:7. This must be our charge today to all our beloved brothers and sisters in the faith.

2) Further, must: "In all things shewing himself *a pattern of good works*...Sound speech that cannot be condemned," Titus 2:7-8. [Text shortened for brevity].

3) Next, strive: "To be an example that enlightens and strengthens the body of Christ." Charge the leadership that you appoint to do the same, Titus 1:4-5. Observe,

4) Finally, should charge the bishops (elders) to "Hold fast the faithful word, [as they had been taught] that they may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," Titus 1:9. Who taught these bishops the faithful words as he had been taught? Titus! Let me be clear regarding the minister and the evangelist's work in the church of the Lord!

5) Conclusion: Some of our congregations have relegated (reduced) the minister's work to only a "pulpit preacher." The ministers and evangelists are instructors, teachers, and examples before and to the congregation. This includes the "eldership or leadership" as well. The ministers and evangelists are "leaders" in the assembly; the only difference is that they are not considered part of the *leadership team*. Their work among the saints is as vital as the elders and deacons. And please don't forget that there would be no "eldership" without their "teaching and the laying on of hands," 1 Timothy 5:22. In the same fashion as the apostles in the first century, Acts 6:1-7. I might add,

NOTE: The eldership exists because of the minister or evangelist's work in the church. If the eldership and deaconship have been properly and scripturally set up among the membership, they have been ordained by the evangelist or minister of Christ, Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

c. Paul wrote: "He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists and some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," Ephesians 4:11-12. Notice the "pecking order" if you would.

1) The ministers and evangelists are under the watchful eyes of the eldership, but the eldership is charged to follow their *preaching of the word*, just like the membership.

2) If this is not the case in your assembly, the eldership is *out of their lane*!

3) That charge is also given unto us today: "To teach no other doctrine." We once believed sincerely in this charge as a congregation of God's people. But something has happened along the way? We have been "removed from faithfully teaching and preaching sound doctrine." Why? It may be that we are no longer being influenced by the charge of the "restoration movement." That is: "to speak where the bible speaks, and to be silent where it is silent." Continuing,

d. Paul admonished all the churches to be united in the teachings and "commandments of the Lord," 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 1:27, etc. This charge has not been rescinded. Every generation of God's people must continually *strive together* for the faith of the gospel. Observe,

3. He wrote Philippi: "Only let your conversation (manner of life) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one minded striving together for the faith of the gospel," Philippians 1:27; Philippians 3:16. Notice,

a. He penned Galatia: "Stand fast therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (the law)," Galatians 5:1. And,

b. To Corinth, he inscribed: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Corinthians 15:58.

c. To Colosse, he inscribed: "If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under the heavens, of which I Paul am made a minister," Colossians 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:11-16.

4. Conclusion: The church must remain in the sound teaching it has heard, learned, believed, obeyed, and instructed to remain "faithful to it!" Now, we will consider what the apostle means, "and turn away from them." Please observe that he did not write: "Turn them away," but: "Turn away from them and their divisive teaching (don't listen or give heed to it)."

E. Turn away from them. The apostles' remaining instruction to the saints at Rome was that they should "*turn away from them.*" Some translations read "to avoid them." Consider,

1. However, the verb "turn away" in Gr., is *ekklinō*, which means to deviate, shun, or decline: —to avoid, eschew, go out of the way from, 1 Peter 3:11. The believers are to eschew (shun) evil, and do good, to seek peace, and ensue (pursue) it, Romans 12:18. We cannot allow divisive words or behavior to remain among us, no: "not for an hour," Galatians 2:5. Observe,

2. Paul's instruction to Thessalonica: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us," 2 Thessalonians 3:6. Notice, they were to "withdraw themselves from them" rather than to "turn them away" from the assembly.

3. He continued: "And if any man obeys not our word by this epistle, note that man, and *have no company* with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet *count him not as an enemy*, but admonish him as a brother," 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15.

4. He wrote similar directives to Corinth: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to (keep) company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs to go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat," 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. Have no dealings, even to eat, or have any company with them!

5. The church then must not "turn them away." But to "turn away from their destructive words and actions." Anyone who calls themselves a brother or sister and practices such must be avoided, and "we must withdraw ourselves from them." Notice Paul again,

6. To Timothy, he wrote:

a. First, "If any man (teaches) otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness."

b. Further, "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, of which cometh envy, strife, railing, and evil surmising (suspicion)."

c. Finally, "Perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing to gain in godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain," 1 Timothy 6:3-6.

7. Conclusion: The church must be vigilant in identifying those who sow divisions and offenses within the body. The eldership, ministers, and members must be alert to their destructive words and deeds. The ministers and evangelists must preach and teach the "sound words" or the "healthy teaching" for the membership to remain strong and in the faith. Any deviation from "the truth" must be identified, corrected, and overturned. However, we must remember that those who behave as such are still our brothers and sisters. And we can address them as such but *have no company* with them. The goal of our behavior is to save them from themselves! Let's now consider point two in this lesson.

II THAT SERVES NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

A. Paul continued: The word "such" in Romans 16:18a refers to the word "them" in Romans 16:17b. It is the "such" and the "them" that we should "turn away from." They do not abide by sound doctrine nor seek true fellowship with the saints in Rome and elsewhere. They are those who make and *sow divisions and offenses* that destroy the work of Christ. Some, however, may not even know that they are not walking in concert with the will of God. This begs an interesting question: Who are the "*such*" who serve not the Lord Jesus Christ *but their (own) belly*, and the "*them*" that we must *turn away from*? [Please

underline these three words in your bible]. This is an essential mandate given to us by the beloved apostle Paul. How can we make “heads and tails” of these words? Who do these words refer to in our text of discussion? I sought an answer, and it involved a little work. So, I began my research by attempting,

1. To connect the word: “them,” a pronoun in Romans 16:17b, to its corresponding noun within our text. There was no noun in verse 17. That the word “them” is correlated. However, I did observe,
 - a. First, the word “them” in Gr., is *autos* a pronoun, or P-GPM.
 - b. Next, generally, a pronoun *follows a noun* mentioned earlier within the same context of scriptures.
 - c. Finally, I could not find the *noun* this pronoun “them” is modifying in Romans 16:17.

NOTE: GPM means Genitive Plural Masculine, in case, number, and gender. If you are familiar with some of our other dissertations, you have been exposed to Greek Parsing. This work is necessary to identify the “such,” the “them,” and the “their own” in Romans 16:17-18. Continuing,

2. Pronouns usually follow a noun mentioned earlier. However, I did identify another pronoun, definite article, and an adjective that agrees in case, number, and gender in verse 18. Observe,

- a. The phrase “their own” in Gr., is *heautou*, a Reflexive pronoun, or F-3GPM. Then,
- b. The phrase “of the” in Gr., is *ho* and is a definite article, or T-GPM. And finally,
- c. The word “simple” in Gr., is *akakos* and is an adjective, or A-GPM.
- d. This discovery implies that the pronouns F-3GPM and P-GPM, the definite article T-GPM, and the adjectives A-GPM are likewise linked to the *noun*, which has not yet been discovered in our research. I could not locate their *corresponding definite article and noun* within verses 17 and 18 of Romans chapter 16. In this case,

- e. I looked within the proceeding chapters to discover the noun of Paul’s instruction “to turn away from them.” The noun or nouns being modified by these pronouns, an article, and one adjective, have not yet been identified. This happens quite often during Greek Parsing. So,

3. I sought the noun with its definite article in chapter 15. Happily, I located them embedded (included) in verse 8. The discovery text reads: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto *the fathers*,” Romans 15:8. Considering this sentence, “the promises made *unto the fathers*.” I then connected,

- a. The phrase “unto the” in Gr., *ho*, a definite article, or T-GPM.
- b. The word “fathers” in Gr., *patēr*, its noun, or N-GPM.

Along with,

- c. The phrase “their own” in Gr., *heautou*, a Reflexive pronoun, or F-3GPM.

NOTE: A Reflexive Pronoun is used when the subject and the object of a sentence are the same. 3GPM refers to the third person, Genitive Plural Masculine.

- d. The word “them” in Gr., *autos* a pronoun, or P-GPM.
- e. The phrase “of the” in Gr., *ho*, a definite article, or T-GPM.
- f. The word “simple” in Gr., *akakos*, an adjective, or A-GPM. Putting it all together,

4. Conclusion: Therefore, the pronouns “their own and them,” the definite article “of the,” and the adjective “simple” are connected to the “definite article and noun” referring to “*the fathers*” in Romans 15:8. It was members of “the fathers” among the Jewish nation, along with their teachings that Paul instructed that the Romans (and all others saints) should “turn away from,” for they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but “*their (own) bellies*,” Romans 16:17-18. Therefore,

5. Paul referred to the *Jewish fathers* and the people to whom “*the promises were made*.” Peter said: “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having

raised His Son, Jesus, sent Him to bless you, turning away every one of you from his iniquities," Acts 3:22-26. [We will return to this verse later in the lesson]. Paul also included those who were,

a. Of "the circumcision" (or the Pharisees) who form part of the false brethren, calling themselves "the men from James," Galatians 2:4-5; Galatians 2:11-16. In like manner,

b. These were the "*them*" that forbade the Gentiles' entrance "into the church without first keeping the Law and being circumcised," Acts 15:1-5; Acts 15:24.

c. These were the "*them*" that troubled the church and caused divisions and offenses among the brotherhood, who served "*their (own) belly*," and are the "*such*" that Paul instructed the Romans to "turn away from."

d. These are the "*them*" and the "*such*" that the church of Christ watches for and remembers to safeguard itself from these *false brethren* and *doctrines* that cause divisions and offenses. This responsibility has been placed upon the shoulders of the eldership, the ministership, and the membership of Christ's church!

e. We, too, must watch and remember to "take heed to the flock of God," Acts 20:28-32. For all those who called themselves "believers" have not "*the faith in Christ Jesus*," Romans 3:24-26; 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Many today profess faith in Christ but have yet to believe and obey Him! Sadly, they do many "things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth," Acts 26:9. Just like Saul had done before his conversion to Christ, Galatians 1:13-16. But now, "he preaches the faith he once ravaged (sought to destroy)," Galatians 1:22-24. See EGNT, page 491.

NOTE: Consider "Paul's Farewell to Ephesus," Acts 20:17-38. Also, in "The Minister's Life and Work," 1 Timothy 4:12-16; Titus 2:7-8. Download these lessons from SermonCentral.com by Ron Freeman, Evangelist. Finally,

6. Paul asks for prayer. Paul concludes Romans chapter 15 with these words. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and the love of the Spirit, that you strive with me in your prayers to God for me. That *I may be delivered* from them who *do not believe* in Judaea, and the saints may accept my service from Jerusalem. That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now, the God of peace is with you all. Amen," Romans 15:30-33. Paul asks a similar request of the saints in Thessalonica, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2. He continued, they,

B. Serves not our Lord. Paul further states they do not "serve the Lord Jesus Christ." Mark them, for they are not the servants of Christ. Those who claim to serve the Lord will abide by His message. Paul's Letter to Philippi speaks of those who faithfully served the Lord. Observe,

1. First, Timothy, who was his beloved son in the faith. Notice how he wrote of him in this letter.

a. "But I trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to send Timotheus (Timothy) shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state:"

b. "I have *no man-likeminded* who will naturally care for your state."

c. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

d. "But you *know the proof of him*, that, as a son with the father, *he hath served with me* in the gospel."

1) "Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me."

2) "But I trust in the Lord that I also shall come shortly," Philippians 2:19-24.

e. Text's exegesis. Paul is presently hoping to send Timothy to the church at Philippi. He wants to know how the church is doing and tell them his current state. He speaks well of his son in the faith. He says I have no man-likeminded who naturally cares for and serves you as I do! All others seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. However, you know Timothy's faith and service to Christ. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in the gospel. What a soul-stirring message of commendation to

Timothy. O' Lord, give us more, sons like Timothy! Paul then turns his attention to Epaphroditus, that faithful servant of the Lord.

2. Further, Epaphroditus, Philippians 2:25-30. Time does not permit us to discuss all this loving brother's work for Philippi and other assemblies. Cut out some points about his faithfulness and sacrifices for the saints.

3. Finally, the saints at Philippi. He penned: "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodas and Syntyche that they are of the same mind in the Lord. And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, *help those women* which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and others of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life...Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do and the God of peace shall be with you," Philippians 4:1-9. [Text shortened for brevity]. Paul reminds them of their faith, devotion to the Lord, and care and love for the brotherhood. Now, let's speak to these "evil beasts and slow bellies," Titus 1:12. These men,

C. Served their (own) bellies. Paul mentions them in his Letter to Philippi. They were the enemies of the cross of Christ and the gospel of the Son of God. They were not serving Christ but their (own) bellies (self-interest, lustful desires, and sensual pleasures). Consider,

1. To Philippi, he wrote: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walks, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the *enemies of the cross of Christ*. Whose end is destruction, *whose (god) is their belly*, whose *glory is in their shame*, who *mind earthly things*)," Philippians 3:17-19; Philippians 3:1-3.

2. To Titus in Crete, he penned: "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision. Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for *filthy lucre's sake*." Time permitting, we'll return to this verse later.

a. "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said: The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, and slow bellies. This witness is true."

b. "Wherefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be *sound in the faith*. Titus, watch that: "They are not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that *turn from the truth*." He continued,

c. "Unto the pure, all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving are nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled."

d. "They profess that they know God, but in works, they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate," Titus 1:10-16. Paul wrote of some,

3. To Timothy, "Who...Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers (various sources of) lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Timothy 3:5-7.

a. Just like his words were to Titus, Timothy is also advised that such men are a "lot of foam and fizz" but have no truth to their words and deeds.

b. They enter the houses of the weak and unlearned to lead them away in their lustful and sinful practices.

c. They have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof from such he admonishes to turn away.

D. Peter's warnings of false teachers. He wrote: "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious (evil, or destructive) ways, who shall cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of. And

through courteousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you, who judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not," 2 Peter 2:1-3. He continues,

1. First, "But these, as *natural brute beasts*, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their corruption:"

a. One, "And shall *receive the reward* of unrighteousness, as they count it a pleasure to riot in the daytime." God has prepared and will provide them a "just recompense of reward," Hebrews 2:1-4.

b. Two, "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their deceivings while they feast with you." They eat with them to devour the weak and unlearned believers in their lustful works.

c. Three, "Having eyes *full of adultery*, and that cannot *cease from sin*, beguiling unstable souls: a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children." These are those given to sin and disobedience, who cannot cease from sin: deceiving and being deceived!

d. Four, "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who *loved the wages* of unrighteousness," 2 Peter 2:12-15. Their sins now entrap those who have forsaken the right way, "enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season," Hebrews 11:24-25.

2. Further, "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mists of darkness are reserved forever," 2 Peter 2:17. Their hearts are void of the "living water of life," John 4:13-15; John 7:37-39. They are mere clouds full of hot air! Being pushed and tossed about by the mighty storm of sin, disobedience by the evil one, and his messengers of ungodliness and corruption, Ephesians 4:13-15. Notice,

3. Next, "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were once clean, having escaped from them now live in error (and transgressions):"

NOTE: The word "wantonness" is also called "lasciviousness, and filthy shameless behavior," Romans 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3; and 2 Peter 2:18. It is described as the unbridled lust, excessive, and insolence practices of sin and ungodliness. A person given to sin and disobedience has no conscience or shame for their corruptible and ungodly behavior. Their leaders of error and deception,

a. One, "While they promise them (you) liberty and freedom."

b. Two, "They *themselves are become* the servants of corruption."

c. Three, "For whom (evil men and seducers) having once overcome, of the same (corruption and sin) they are now brought (again) into bondage (destruction and eternal damnation)," 2 Peter 2:18-19. Peter summarizes their fate,

4. Finally, "If after they have escaped the world's pollutions through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: After being *delivered and freed* from such sins by Christ Jesus."

a. One, "They are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." They are again entangled with sin and disobedience, being overcome by it, finding their latter end worse than the beginning. Peter warns them and us,

b. Two, "For it had been better for them not to have known *the way of righteousness* than to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them after they have known it." Observe Peter's frightful and applauding end of these deceivers and their deceived,

c. Three, "But it happened *unto them* according to the true proverb: The dog has turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," 2 Peter 2:20-22. Solomon wrote: "As a dog *returneth* to his vomit, so a fool *returneth* to his folly," Proverbs 26:11.

d. O Lord, God, keep our feet in thy pathway and our walk without any stumbling!

5. Conclusion: These are the "them" and the "such" to which Paul warned the Romans "to turn away from them." This warning, however, we have received first for the Lord. He warned His apostles of:

a. The Pharisees: "In the meantime...he began to say unto his disciples, first of all: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, *which is hypocrisy*. For nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever you have spoken in the darkness shall be heard in the light, and that which you have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetop," Luke 12:1-3; Hebrews 4:13.

b. Their hypocrisy: "Then spake Jesus to the multitude and his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees (when they) sit in Moses' seat: All (things) therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not you *after their works*: for they say, and do not." Observe,

1) "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to bear and lay them on men's shoulders, but they will not move them with one of their fingers."

2) "But all their works they do to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments."

3) "They love the uppermost rooms at the feast, the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets (places), and to be called by men, Rabbi, Rabbi." Finally,

4) "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that humble himself shall be exalted," Matthew 23:1-12. [Text shortened for brevity]. Stephens reminds them of their forefathers being,

c. Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers," Acts 7:51-52. Paul wrote of the forefathers,

d. Disobedience and gainsaying: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So, then, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? ...But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses said, I will provoke you to jealousy by them, who are no people, and by a foolish nation, I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long *I have stretched forth my hands* unto a *disobedient and gainsaying people*," Romans 10:16-21. [Text shortened for brevity]. Observe the results of Paul's preaching to the "leading Jews in Rome," Acts 28:22-31. Many there, too, "would not hear the word of the Lord that they might be saved."

e. Conclusion. Indeed, this message was about the "religious fathers" of Israel, the scribes and the Pharisees. It includes all those who follow after their "hardness of heart" and their "sin and disobedience to the gospel of Christ." Observe,

E. Jude's warning. We will allow him to close out this point in the lesson. He wrote: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied," Jude 1:1-2.

1. He begins, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," Jude 1:3. He speaks of several important matters in this verse. Observe,

a. First, he gives all diligence to write unto us of "the *common salvation*." All knew this salvation and believed and were obedient to the gospel of Christ Jesus.

b. Further, it was "needful for him to write unto us."

c. Next, to exhort us to "contend (strive) for the faith earnestly."

d. Finally, that was "once delivered unto the saints."

2. Here's why. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 1:4. Just as they did in Galatia. Paul wrote,
- a. First, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel, Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ...revelation of Jesus Christ," Galatians 1:6-12. How was this possible? [Text shortened for brevity]. Notice Paul's answer,
 - b. Further, "And because of *false brethren* unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To who, we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue among you," Galatians 2:4-5. Consider Dr. Ronald Y. K. Fung's comments on these verses. He wrote,
 - 1) First, "These 'interlopers' (intruders) Paul roundly condemn as 'sham-Christians,' that is, persons who called themselves and were probably regarded by others as Christians but whose conduct... falsified their claim to be (a) Christian."
 - 2) Second, "Paul charges them with having infiltrated the ranks of the Gentile Christians (at Antioch) 'to spy out our (their) liberty which we (they) had in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us (them) into bondage.'"
 - 3) Thirdly, "The word translated 'spy out' (kataskopēsai) carries the nuance of inquiry with a claim to the right of supervision,' and may contain an ironical reference to us of episkopēsai ('to supervise') by the false brethren (or the Galatian heretics)," Page 93. (Some insertions are mine for clarity).
 - 4) Fourthly, B. W. Johnson wrote these: "Judaizing, or other false teachers, who disturbed the Gentile churches by urging them to keep the law of Moses, or by teaching some heresy. Read the Epistle to the Galatians. They were not to listen to them and were to avoid them...Like many other false teachers, these men were more devoted to their appetites than Christ," Page 435. [Edited in active voice]. Brother Fung agrees with Brother Johnson's comments regarding these "false brothers." Paul had rightly identified who the "innocent and simple" are in this text. Now, let's observe Peter's poor example as an apostle before the church in Antioch, Acts 11:19-30; Acts 13:1-3.
 - c. Next, "But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed. For before the certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (pretense or hypocrisy)," Galatians 2:11-13; Romans 12:9. What action did Paul take?
 - d. Finally, "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as so the Jews?... Knowing that the works of the law do not justify a man, but by *the faith of Jesus Christ*...for by works of the law shall no flesh be justified," Galatians 2:14-16; Romans 5:1-2.
 - e. Conclusion: Paul felt it necessary to call out Peter for his lack of faith and fear of those called "the circumcision." Peter had a prime opportunity to stand up for the "truth of the gospel." But again, he failed the Lord and the entire Gentile congregation. Peter did not exhibit "apostolic leadership."
 - 1) Unfortunately, many of our elderships are not demonstrating "leadership" by not calling out all the hateful rhetoric that has been spewed out of the mouths of many members of their political Party!
 - 2) Perhaps the same fear that loomed over Peter's heart has overtaken theirs! These elderships serve their political party (Republicans and Democrats) rather than serving the Lord Jesus Christ!

3) Many of them have also embraced “White Nationalism,” even being so deceived that they consider this movement part of the Christian Faith. This movement spews out of its mouth the same hateful rhetoric of Nazism (hate, separation, and segregation). I’m afraid some of the Lord’s congregations have lost their way, but they must turn from this teaching and behavior if they desire to be saved.

DEFINITION: Wikipedia, *White Nationalism*. See the references below.

NOTE: Download our lesson “What Does God Require? (Online), from SermonCentral.com by Ron Freeman, Evangelist. It exposes this evil and corrupt movement to the world. Continuing,

3. Brother Jude wrote: “These filthy dreamers also defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities...But these speak evil of those things which they know not, but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in that thing, they corrupt themselves,” Jude 1:8-10.

a. Jude again, “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feed themselves without fear: clouds they are without water carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruits, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out of their shame, wandering stars, to whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever...These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts, and their mouths speak great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of their advantage (benefit, profit or position),” Jude 1:12-16.

b. Jude’s appeal: “But, beloved, remember you the words (which were) spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their ungodly lust. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit,” Jude 1:17-19. Who are they? Jude concludes by charging us to “keep ourselves in the love of God.”

c. Jude’s solemn plea: “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your (in the) most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,” Jude 1:20-21.

NOTE: The EGNT reads: “But you, beloved, on your most holy faith building up yourselves, in [the] Praying Spirit praying, keep yourselves in [the] love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life eternal,” Page 622. Another rendering is: “*epoikodomeō heautou en ta pistis hagios*” or “building up yourselves *in the faith* most holy, praying in the Holy Ghost.” See Note: f, LTrAW, at the bottom of Page 622. This is *the faith* once delivered unto the saint, Jude 1:3. He continues,

1) First, “Some have compassion, making a difference.”

2) Further, “Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

3) Next, “Now unto Him that can keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

4) Finally, “To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen,” Jude 1:22-25.

NOTE: Download our lesson “Our God is Able” from SermonCentral.com by Ron Freeman, Evangelist. It discusses these verses more completely.

4. Conclusion: Like the apostles, Jude warns us how those *who make divisions and offenses* enter and seduce the unexpected and innocent. Luring them into sin and disobedience through *their lusts and entice*, even as James warned us, James 1:12-15. These false teachers promise them freedom, but their reward is, again, the captivity of sin and the promise of eternal damnation, Romans 6:23. Jude then admonishes us to keep ourselves in the love of God, building up ourselves in *(the)* faith through prayers in the Holy Ghost. In doing so, we might be able to save some and keep ourselves from falling to be presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. This we will do if the LSS! Now, let’s look at our last point.

III THAT DECEIVES THE HEART OF THE SIMPLE

A. Paul concludes: "And by (or with) good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple," Romans 16:18b. The apostle speaks directly to those who make divisions and offenses as being *the simple, fooled, and deceived*. You might recall that we concluded it was *the fathers* the apostle is alluding to in this "definite article and noun" 1) The phrase, "unto the" or *ho*, a definite article, or T-GPM, and 2) the word "fathers" or *patēr*, its noun, or N-GPM.

NOTE: The EGNT reads: "And by kind speaking and praise they deceive the hearts of the *simple or innocent*," Page 435. Paul refers to "the fathers" and religious leaders as the "simple" who he was once a member, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews, and *the sect* of the Pharisees," Philippians 3:5-7; Galatians 1:13-14; 1 Timothy 1:12-15. Paul wrote by their,

1. "Good words" in Gr., is *chrēstologia*, which means fair speaking, the smooth and plausible address that simulates goodness (but is conceived and spoken with evil intent). These *false teachers* were convincing in their words. They could orate and persuade many. Two such men come to mind at this junction of the lesson. They are Tertullus, an orator hired to speak against Paul in Caesarea, and Apollos, a young rabbi who had just arrived in Ephesus and would "learn the way of God" more perfectly by Aquila and Priscilla, a tent maker and his wife. Observe,

2. First, Tertullus, an orator for the Jews against Paul, Acts 24:1-9. Luke wrote of his address to the governor, Felix. He penned, "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul:"

a. Tertullus address: "And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him (Paul), saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deed is done unto this nation by thy providence."

1) "We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness."

2) "Notwithstanding, that I will not be further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words."

3) "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarene."

4) "Who also hath gone about to profane the temple, whom we took, and would have judged according to our law."

b. The chief captain's interruption. Tertullus accused: "But the chief captain Lysias came upon us and violently took him out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee by examining whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him."

c. The Jews' witness: "And the Jews also assented, saying that they things were so," Acts 24:1-9.

3. Paul's defense. "Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself."

a. Paul's defense. He begins,

1) "Because thou mayest understand that it has been twelve days since I went to Jerusalem to worship."

2) "And they found me neither in the temple disputing with any man, nor raising the people, nor in the synagogues, nor the city. Neither can they prove the things of which they now accuse me."

3) "But this I confess unto thee, that *after the way which they call heresy*, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things written in the law and the prophets."

4) "And have hope toward God, which they also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."

- 5) "And herein do I exercise myself, to always have *a conscience void* of offense towards God and men."
- b. Paul's evidence offered in his defense. He states,
- 1) "After many years, I came to bring alms an offering to my nation."
 - 2) "Certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with the multitude nor with tumult."
 - 3) "Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had (anything) against me."
 - 4) "Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council. Except for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day," Acts 24:10-21.
4. Felix's response. Luke continued: "And when Felix heard these things, *having perfect knowledge* of that way (*the sect* of the Nazarene), he deferred them and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him," Acts 24:22-23. Now let's consider our last "great orator" rabbi Apollos, from Alexandria, Egypt. Who perhaps was once a part of the synagogue of the Alexandrians, Acts 6:9. But now resides in Ephesus. NOTE: Wikipedia, *Alexandria*. See references below. Notice,
5. Luke's impressive resume of Apollos can be found in Acts 18:24-28. Observe,
- a. First, he came to Ephesus. Luke wrote: "And a *certain Jew* named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus," Acts 18:24. Luke states that he was first a Jew, born in Alexandria. He was not a resident of Jerusalem or Judaea but was born and raised in Egypt. Apollos had an impressive resume! Observe, he was,
 - 1) "An eloquent man." A great "orator," he was a learned man in the letters. He was skilled in delivering his lesson, perhaps knowledgeable about history and antiquities. He was a skilled speaker, eloquent, rational, and wise in his presentation of the word of God. Luke wrote that he was,
 - 2) "Mighty in the scriptures." His heart and presentation were emersed in the scriptures, not his words! Keep your face in the word and not in the mirror. He cited the text, explained it, and applied it to John the Baptist's predictions of the coming "Messiah." John was that "voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight," Matthew 3:1-3; Isaiah 40:3-5.
 - 3) "Who came to Ephesus." Instead, learn why God had sent him to this city. His learning was about to begin. He knew about John the Baptist. In Ephesus, he would hear about "the Christ" and the message of the kingdom of God, faith in Him, and how believers can be obedient to "Esaia's Report." Recall Paul's message regarding Israel: "For they all have not obeyed the gospel," Romans 10:16-18.
 - b. Further, he was instructed in *the way of the Lord*. Luke continued, "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John," Acts 18:25. Notice he was:
 - 1) "Instructed in the *way of the Lord*." He had a good foundation on which to build.
 - 2) "Being fervent in the spirit." His message was not just a teaching but a passionate proclamation! His message even had a "little fire" in it!
 - 3) "Spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord." He spoke and taught correctly the things he knew about the Lord. Unaware that He had already come, even as Paul wrote: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory," 1 Timothy 3:16. He would learn of Him. Although, with all this talent, Apollos was deficient in his message of Christ. Luke wrote that he,

4) “Knew only the baptism of John.” This would make a profound difference to his preaching, and God had opened the way of faith to him through a loving couple in Ephesus. This sentence is Luke's prelude to Paul's return visit to Ephesus and his preaching to some men who “knew only the baptism of John,” Acts 19:1-7. We will expound upon this later in the lesson.

c. Next, he began to speak. Luke continued: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him *the way of God* more perfectly,” Acts 18:26; John 6:44-45. He was,

1) A bold, fearless speaker. Luke noted: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue.” Maybe this man was like other “young preachers,” ready to go with a “message full of fire!” I was always willing to give way to visiting preachers and my students to allow them time to preach to God's people in the assembly. I never once gave way and did not hear an inspiring message from these loving brothers.

However,

2) Someone was listening. “Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard?” It is always advisable, if you seek to make any corrections to the message of another, first to know the truth yourself and do it in kindness and love. Never be a party that carries gossip: “I am told that you said this or that, or the other.” Do you mean you did not hear the error yourself? Be careful; you might be setting yourself up for a *strong rebuke* from a loving preacher! They first heard him, and witnessed,

3) His doctrinal error. Then, “took him unto them.” Perhaps, quietly and privately, they advised Apollos of the incompleteness of his message regarding “the Christ and His baptism.” Many today speak incompletely regarding Christ and the requirement for believers to have faith and demonstrate “their faith through obedience to the gospel,” Romans 10:16-18; Romans 6:17-18. They gave him,

4) A compassionate correction. “And expounded unto him *the way of God* more perfectly.” This couple knew the “way of salvation” themselves. Paul had taught them the gospel and prepared them to “teach others also,” 2 Timothy 2:2. The brothers,

d. Also, sent Apollos to Achaia. Luke again: “And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he came, helped them much which had believed through grace,” Acts 18:27.

e. Finally, mighty in the scriptures. Luke concludes: “For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ,” Acts 18:28. This man entered Ephesus, not even knowing Christ. He can now “*cut Christ out*” of all the Old Testament scriptures.

5. Conclusion. We have witnessed these two men, one dishonest and the other honest, addressing an audience. Tertullus, a false accuser of Paul, attempted to deceive the governor about the apostle's alleged wrongdoings. At the same time, Apollos was honest in his presentation regarding what he knew about the way of the Lord. Apollos, once learning about the “way of God more perfectly,” was obedient to the gospel of the grace of God. We can only surmise that Tertullus never righted *the false testimony* he and his false accusers assailed against Paul, and God will judge all of them. Therefore, let's return to Paul's message to Rome of these Judaizers who were persuasive and deceptive in their messages of Christ to the Jews and Gentiles. Paul called them “enemies of the cross and the gospel of Christ!” They spoke words of,

B. Praise to their audience. The word “praise,” in Gr., is *eulogias*, which means an acceptable discourse, polished, polluted, and polite language that avails nothing by way of righteousness. As servants of the Lord, we must be kind with our words but not compromise the truth we preach! Paul speaks of “good words and fair speeches,” which do just that: compromise and deceive others.

1. This phrase, “good words,” means, i.e., encouraging, praising, and flattering (although utterly false).

2. Likewise, the phrase “fair speeches,” means i.e., elegant language and commendation (“*eulogias*”). We derive our English word “eulogy” from the Greek word “*eulogias*.” It means an address of heartfelt words of commendation but for some void of the truth of the one we have gathered to eulogize. Recall,

3. The “eulogy” is an address that speaks well of a man or woman at a funeral. It’s not the time to speak evil or unkind of the recently departed (some fine time to do that during the repass). The last words should, however, mirror the person’s life and work in the home, church, and community.

ILLUSTRATE: One person heard such words during a funeral that he got out of his seat, went down front, and looked into the casket to ensure he was attending the proper funeral. The minister spoke “such great swelling words” of someone he knew to be an evil specimen of a man and a tyrant in business! Notice that they spoke great, swelling words to Jesus. Observe,

a. Matthew noted: “And they sent out unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their *wickedness* and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?” Matthew 22:16-18; Job 32:21-22. Not all words of praise are given or questions asked in truth by one having a deceitful heart and cunning spirit. Beware, *the leaven of the Pharisees*! (Wickedness, in Gr., is *ponerian* G4189). We’ll return to Jesus’ reference to “*wickedness*” a little later.

b. David wrote: “They speak vanity everyone with his neighbor: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak,” Psalms 12:2; Psalms 5:9.

c. Solomon penned: “When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart,” Proverbs 26:25; Proverbs 29:5.

d. Jeremiah wrote: “For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee,” Jeremiah 12:6.

4. Paul called their messages “good words and fair speeches” in a bad sense; they are artfully adapted to captivate the hearer with their cunning and deceitful words. Their messages are carefully worded to distort and falsify the truth to promote and sanction wicked behaviors. They give license to sin and walk in disobedience to the truth of God. All their words are designed to “turn one away from the truth.” Listen to these apostles,

a. Paul penned Timothy: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for the word of God and prayer sanctifies it,” 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Paul also speaks of the church,

b. He wrote Timothy again: “I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ...preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their lust shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables (lies, false word, and teachings). But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry,” 2 Timothy 4:1-5. Recall that we mentioned this earlier in the lesson. Now hear the apostle of love,

c. John inscribed: “Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us,

but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us," 1 John 2:18-19.

d. Now let's consider what Paul wrote: "They deceive the hearts of the simple," Romans 16:18.

NOTE: In the EGNT, this reads: They "deceive the hearts of the innocent," or "*exapataō tas kardia ton akakos*," Page 435. This sentence bears some investigation and explanation. Recall that we have already identified who Paul meant in this sentence. It was the "such" and the "them" or "the fathers" of the Jewish religion and the "men from James."

C. Deceiving the hearts of the simple or innocent. Undoubtedly, another discussion is required to explain Paul's rationale for this phrase fully. Let's examine it a little closer! Observe,

1. The word "deceive," in Gr., is *exapataō*, which refers to the teachers of this doctrine, the unbelieving and disobedient Jews, and the new Gentile converts.

a. The teachers had become deceived regarding the doctrine they were now propagating to the church of the Gentiles, as well as to undo the apostles preaching of Christ in Jewish synagogues everywhere (to turn away the Jews' ears from the truth).

b. The Jews (Pharisees and Lawyers) had rejected not only Christ but also his message of salvation and acts of faith and obedience. They would not come to Christ, bearing "the fruit of faith, repentance, and obedience" as John the Baptist required, Matthew 3:7-9; Luke 3:7-8. As one of our brothers noted in his dissertation: "The Necessity of Baptism."

c. Ron Freeman wrote: "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him (John), Luke 7:30...The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God. To reject the commandments of God is to bring judgment upon yourself, John 12:48...The religious leaders had little use for demonstrating repentance in John's Baptism. Their hearts were hardened towards John, so their cruel and brutal treatment of the Lord was no surprise. Isaiah wrote: "For He was wounded for our transgression, bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray...and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all, Isaiah 53:5-6," Pages 23-24.

NOTE: Please download "The Necessity of Baptism" from Archive.org by Ron Freeman, Evangelist. This dissertation provides a scriptural explanation of God's requirement for baptism! Continuing,

d. The Gentiles were being taught that although they had obeyed the gospel, they now had to become proselytes before *becoming true Christians*, just like their Jewish brothers had in Judaea and Jerusalem, Galatians 1:21-24; Acts 9:31. However, the Conference in Jerusalem would dispel this notion with a Letter sent to all the Gentile congregations, Acts 15:1-5. It read in part: "Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment," Acts 15:24.

e. This would be a recurring message preached unto all the Gentile congregations, warning of these "men from James," who would disturb the harmony and peace in the first-century church of Christ everywhere. Observe,

2. The word "hearts" in Gr., is *kardia*, which means the heart and mind. Another word has surfaced concerning the victims of these false teachers. They are the innocent babes that made up the church both among the Jews in Judaea and Jerusalem and the Gentile congregations in Europe, Asia, and Africa. As a result of the "missionary journeys of Paul and other apostles and disciples during this time. It would be officially addressed by the "apostles, elders, and disciples during the Jerusalem Conference, in Acts 15:1-35. This is a "must read and study," i.e., the discussion of the *doctrine of the Pharisees* who had embraced the "gospel of Christ," Acts 6:7; Acts 15:1-6; Galatians 2:11-16. Now,

3. The word “simple” in Gr., is *ákakos*, translated as “innocent or naïve.” [Most interlinear translations render the article and adjective “*ton akakon*” or “to the simple” to read “the innocent or naïve.”] The word “*ákakos*” could have been mistranslated in the text. Here’s why! Reviewing several interlinear, we have discovered the following. Observe,

NOTE: Interlinear references: The CSB, “the naïve ones,” page 773; the NGE, “the simple,” page 569; the ESV, “the naïve ones,” page 701; the EGNT, “the innocent,” page 435; and the NRSV, “the simple,” page 577. The BLB renders it “unsuspecting: —harmless, simple.”

a. However, Romans 16:19 translates the Greek word “*akeraiosa*” as “simple and harmless.” The Greek word “*akeraios*” is translated as “harmless” in Matthew 10:16 and Philippians 2:15. Their Greek Parsing codes are G185 and A-NPM. It is translated as “simple” in Romans 16:19 and coded in Greek as G185, A-APM. It might be that the Greek word “*ákakos*” and its translation “simple” could be an error. A-NPM is Adjective-Nominative Plural Masculine, and A-APM is Adjective-Accusative Plural Masculine. I speak now from experience in the word of God, not education!

b. In my judgment, the adjective “*ákakos*” or “simple” in Romans 16:18 could have been translated without the *negative particle*: “*a*” or “*alpha*”; instead, as “*kakos*” and translated “bad or evil” G-2556, A-ASN.

NOTE: A-ASN means Adjective-Accusative Singular Neuter. See also G2549 “wicked;” and G4189 “wickedness,” except in (Acts 3:26), where it is translated as “iniquities.” See EGNT, Page 320.

NOTE: The EGNT did not translate the Greek word “*ponēria*” in Acts 3:26 as “iniquities” but “wickedness” G4189, N-GPF, or Noun-Genitive Plural Feminine, as with six other scriptures. These six other scriptures may also indicate that Acts 3:26 was possibly mistranslated. Please review my work here for your edification and verification of my results. Don’t accept my findings, verify!

1) As mentioned earlier, Jesus called the temptation of Him by the Pharisees “wickedness” G4189. See Matthew 22:16-18. The Master called their works “wickedness” or “*ponēria*” G4189, N-ASF, from a heart “of evil purpose or desire.”

2) The Greek word “*ponēria*” describes the character of the men or women who “make divisions and offenses” in the church, Romans 16:17. This phrase, “the simple” in Romans 16:18, defines the ones causing “the divisions and offenses,” not the ones being fooled or deceived by such divisions or offenses.

3) They are the *perpetrators* of wickedness and the *victims* of their teachings and evil works.

NOTE: All 5 Interlinear mentioned earlier translated “*ponēria*” as “wicked, wickedness, wicked ways, or evil” but not as “iniquities.”

c. Recall the deceived, while deceiving, become deceived themselves. This condition refers to the Jewish “fathers or the Pharisees” and “the men from James.” Of course, I cannot say definitively why this is so, but the context of the text supports this translation. The Greek Parsing presented earlier has *justly classified* these men or deceivers as “*the fathers*” in Romans 15:8. Paul means the Jewish leaders, the representative of the Jewish religion, and “the people,” Acts 3:25-26.

NOTE: Recall, in our Greek Parsing Exercise (GPE), we identified that the “such” and the “them” are to be: “turned away from?” But we also learned the phrase: “their own” belly referred to “the fathers” or the Jewish leaders (the scribe and the Pharisees) because the Reflexive Pronoun – 3rd Person Genitive Plural Masculine, or F-3GPM, is used when the subject and the object of a sentence are the same. Therefore, “the simple” refers to the scribes, the Pharisees, and all others disturbing the church of Christ with their messages of “divisions and offenses, and should be turned away from,” Romans 16:17-18; Romans 15:8. And not to any other “simple, innocent or harmless” souls.

d. These teachers and deceivers desired to turn away the hearts of the Gentiles from the gospel; their messages sowed doubt and mistrust in what they had believed and obeyed: the gospel of Christ. Immediately, as a church had been planted in the city or country of the Gentiles, these evil men and seducers would show up to plant doubt in what they had believed and obeyed. Those susceptible to their message were “the innocent and babes in Christ.”

e. However, these men and seducers worked just as hard to keep the *Jews and proselytes* from hearing and obeying the gospel's truth, or Esaias' Report,” Romans 10:16-21. The unsuspecting Jews and proselytes. Who trusted these men's words, not fearing any evil nor distrusting of those who claimed to be preserving the Jewish religion, and warring against “the sect of the Nazarene,” Acts 24:5. Also called “the way of truth,” 2 Peter 2:1-3; and the “way of salvation,” Acts 16:17. Paul, indeed was including himself of this behavior while he terrorized the church of Christ before his conversion, Galatians 1:21-24; Galatians 1:13-16; Acts 8:1-3. Others are also,

4. Here are some examples where these Jewish deceivers were turning away their Jewish brothers, sisters, and proselytes from the truth of the gospel being preached by Paul and Barnabas. This began earnestly after Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to embark on their “First Missionary Journey,” Acts 13:1-4. The first encounter with the Jews began in Antioch in Pisidia. Observe,

a. Paul and Barnabas in Antioch in Pisidia. Luke wrote: “But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rules of the synagogue sent unto them, saying: Ye men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up and, beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and you that fear God, give audience,” Acts 13:14-41. [Text shortened for brevity]. Now observe the behavior of the multitude,

1) The Gentiles. Luke continued: “And when the Jews left the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Now, when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God,” Acts 13:42-44. Regarding,

2) The Jews. Luke wrote: “But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming,” Acts 13:45.

3) Paul and Barnabas. Luke continued: “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing you put it from you, and *judge yourselves* unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth,” Acts 13:46-47.

4) Conclusion: Luke concluded: “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. The word was published throughout the entire region. But *the Jews stirred up* the devout and honorable women and the chief men of the city, raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them and came into Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost,” Acts 13:48-52. Consider the work of,

b. Paul and Barnabas in Iconium. Luke indited: “And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil and affected against the brethren. For a long time, therefore, abode, they spoke boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace and granted signs and wonders to be done

by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them, They were aware of *it* and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: And there *they preached* the gospel," Acts 14:1-7; Romans 15:18-19; 2 Timothy 3:10-13. Consider now,

c. Paul and Barnabas in Lystra. Luke penned: "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving *that he had faith* to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked," Acts 14:8-10. Notice their reactions,

1) "When the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted their voices, as they said in Lycaonia's speech:"

a) "The *gods* are come down to us *in the likeness of men*."

b) "And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because *he was the chief speaker*."

c) "Then the priest of Jupiter, before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates and would have sacrificed with the people," Acts 14:11-13. When the apostles,

2) Paul and Barnabas. "Heard *of this*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also *are men of like passions* with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings (things) *scarcely restrained* they the people, that they had not made sacrifice unto them," Acts 14:14-18. Paul and Barnabas' words and actions barely made a difference to these people. Notice the evil workers,

3) Luke continued: "And there came thither (to Lystra) certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he (was) dead," Acts 14:19. As Luke continues regarding,

4) The disciples. He penned: "Howbeit (however), as the disciples stood round about him, he (Paul) rose, and came (went) into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe," Acts 14:20. We are not told how much time elapsed in Paul's death from their stoning! Is this Paul's vision and revelation, which he wrote about to Corinth? 2 Corinthians 12:1-7. [I'll leave it to you for personal research, investigation, and learning]. The author believes this was when he was called to paradise: "And heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Amen. Moving on,

d. Paul and Barnabas in Derbe. Luke penned: "And when they had preached the gospel to that city (Derbe) and had taught many, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch," Acts 14:21.

e. Paul and Barnabas returning to Antioch. Look what these apostles were doing. Luke wrote,

1) Confirming the disciples. Luke inscribed: "Confirming the souls of the disciples *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts 14:22.

2) Ordaining elders. "Luke continued: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed," Acts 14:23.

3) Preaching the word: "And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. And when they had *preached the word* in Perga, they went down into Attalia."

a) "And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled." See Acts 13:1-4.

b) "And when they came, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

c) "And there they abode a long time with the disciples." Acts 14:24-28.

f. The first missionary journey is completed. Paul and Barnabas, through the work of the Holy Spirit, opened the "door of faith" to the Gentiles. While doing this, the Jews disrupted and attempted to destroy their work among the Gentiles and the Jewish believers in every city they preached in with unparalleled success. Remember, if "God is for you, no one can be against you," Romans 8:28-34.

NOTE: Acts Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 reveal the repeated encounters of the unbelieving and disobedient Jewish leaders and "the people" who sought to thwart the work of Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and other disciples' preaching: unto the Gentiles, proselytes, and honorable men and women being taught "the way of the Lord more perfectly." Paul describes "the fathers" — the Lawyers, scribes, and the Pharisees as "the simple" who were "making these divisions and offenses," and the saints of God everywhere "should turn away from them." We could also include,

5. Those who do not "study, nor search" the scriptures: "To see if those things were so," Acts 17:11.

a. Solomon wrote: "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer," Proverbs 15:28; 2 Timothy 2:15.

b. Jesus said: "Search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me," John 5:39; John 5:45-47; Acts 3:22-23.

c. These teachers and deceivers fooled the gullible and easily persuaded, using the words *they desire* to hear and believe. Paul wrote of them to his sons in the gospel. Observe,

1) To Timothy, he inscribed: "Who...Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers (various sources of) lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Timothy 3:5-7. EGNT, page 551. Also,

2) To Titus, he penned: "For there are many unruly and vain *talkers and deceivers*, especially they of the circumcision. Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for *filthy lucre's sake*," Titus 1:10-11. EGNT, page 555.

d. These are easily misled and deceived. Observe,

1) The new (Gentiles) converts. Recall the saints at Galatia, Galatians 1:4-8.

2) The babes in Christ (unskilled in the word), Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:1-3.

e. The *simple* of which Solomon wrote:

1) "The simple believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going," Proverbs 14:15; Proverbs 14:18. Solomon again,

2) "A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies," Proverbs 14:25.

3) "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise," Proverbs 11:30.

ILLUSTRATE: Paul's work among all men, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. James' work among the erring, James 5:19-20. [Read and comment time permitting]. Let's now turn to the work of God's divine leaders in the church of the Lord. Observe,

D. The eldership's work: "Therefore watch, and remember," Acts 20:31. Paul continues his discourse with these elders with a warning. It would be appropriate for you to turn to Acts 20 while I review Paul's instruction to the elders at Ephesus, Acts 20:17-38. While on the isle of Miletus, he recollected 1) his commitment among them, 2) his commission to them, and 3) his character before them. I will summarize a portion of his discourse to them, beginning with verse 28. "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and unto the flock...which He purchased with His (own) blood." We mentioned this verse earlier in the lesson. Observe,

1. The word “therefore” comes from the words “before” it. Due to the soon “departure from the faith” and the “grievous wolves entering in among you,” you watch and remember all the things I am mentioning now and while I was with you, laboring in Ephesus.
 2. He reminds them: “That by the space of three years I cease not to warn every one night and day with tears,” Acts 20:31. His warnings were with tears of anguish. He cautions them to consider the pain and travail he underwent while planting the church in Ephesus. Remember: “For a space of three years I ceased not to warn all (of you) night and day with tears,” Acts 20:31.
 3. Paul likens himself to a faithful guard who defended the work he had begun in Jesus' name in Ephesus. Observe,
 - a. First, warning them of the continued dangers of Judaism and heathenism, they had now overcome after they had embraced Christ through “their faith and obedience to the gospel of the grace of God,” Acts 20:24; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-10, and Acts 19:1-7. Watch out for these so-called teachers and servants of Christ.
 - b. Further, warning everyone; in addition to his public warnings in his preaching, he applied himself to particular matters he saw in them, which he could speak to them regarding their faith in Christ.
 - c. Next, he constantly provided them warnings, night and day; his time was filled with saving this work by preparing the leaders to watch and remember his actions among them.
 - 1) At night, when he should have been reposing himself, he dealt with those he did not get to speak with during the day. So that,
 - 2) He might be “pure from the blood of all men...having declared unto them the whole counsel of God,” Acts 20:26-27.
 - 3) By disclosing “the entire message of God” unto them without fear or favor.
 - d. He ceased not to warn. Though they were sometimes resistant to his warnings, he did not cease to warn that they, by the grace of God, might not be overcome by the evil one. However, they appear so pious in their walk and righteousness in their speech. Like,
 - 1) He had also warned the Corinthians: “Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it,” 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. In like manner,
 - 2) Paul does not think he should cease from continued warnings and exhortations. This must also remind us that the times are evil and the enemy is wise. We must remain on guard against all his tactics. The beloved apostle,
 - 3) Paul, like Ezekiel, warned these leaders. To stand on the wall and warn:
 - a) The wicked man, to turn from his wicked ways.
 - b) The wayward man, to return from his wicked ways.
 - c) The righteous man, to remain in his righteous ways.
 - d) Through such warning, “he might deliver his soul,” Ezekiel 3:18-21.
 4. Conclusion: He spoke to them about their souls with great affection and concern and warned them with tears. As he had served the Lord, so he had served them, with many tears, Acts 20:19; Acts 20:31; and Acts 20:37. A loving eldership, preachership, and membership will not only pray for the church but will sometimes weep over it in private and public, as I found myself doing throughout my ministry for our Savior Jesus Christ. For there were times I shed many tears for the church. I could only cry and pray for it. It seemed my preaching was not availing anything! 2 Corinthians 5:9-11.
- NOTE: During those times, I was constantly reminded of Jehovah's promise to Isaiah: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that

which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it," Isaiah 55:11. Thank you, Lord! Paul now warns these elders:

a. With many tears of concern and compassion, showing how much he was affected by the hurt and danger awaiting the church in Ephesus. Thank God they stayed with the Lord, Revelation 2:1-7. Just as Barnabas encouraged the church in Antioch, Luke notated: "Who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and encouraged them all that with the purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord...He was a good man...full of the Holy Ghost and faith: and many people were added unto the Lord," Acts 11:23-24. In other words: "stay with the Lord."

NOTE: Read Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, for the mystery of the "Seven Churches In Asia," Revelation 1:11; Revelation 1:20; and Romans 16:16. The Seven Churches of Christ weathered the storms of false teachers and their teaching throughout Asia. Paul now speaks of his pending trials.

b. He assures them that "the bonds and afflictions awaiting him in Jerusalem" would not deter him in his work, Acts 20:22-23. He would gladly suffer them "in the name of the Lord Jesus," Acts 21:10-14. If the church will survive today, we will need more leaders like Paul, Barnabas, and Silas!

c. Paul's assurance to Corinth: "That their labors shall not in vain in the Lord," 1 Corinthians 15:58. To Ephesus: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which can build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified," Acts 20:32. I now commend those leaders reading or hearing this lesson in like manner. The churches of Christ shall weather our storms as well, with God's help and Christ's doctrine, and praying in the Holy Spirit!

d. Like David wrote: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him," Psalms 127:5-6. Paul now turns his attention again to the church in Rome. He encourages and praises them for their faith in Christ. Notice his final commendation.

E. Finally, to Romans. He wrote: "For your (their) obedience has reached all. I rejoice, therefore, concerning you, but I wish (desire) you to be wise to (the) good, and simple to (the) evil," Romans 16:19. Let's hear his final tribute to the saints in Rome. We are near the conclusion of this lesson. Observe,

1. First, "For your *obedience* comes abroad unto all *men*; or you have reached to all people," Romans 16:19a. The apostles speak well of their faith and obedience, as they are known by all congregations, nations, and people everywhere. Someone had taught them well! Notice,

a. He repeats his compliments to them, saying the same thing in his introduction to them in this letter. He wrote: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of (by everyone) throughout the world," Romans 1:8. What a tremendous compliment to Rome.

b. I would like it to be the same for every congregation of God's children. To be known by their faithfulness and obedience to Christ Jesus, their Savior and Lord. He wrote,

c. To Thessalonica: "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but also in every place your faith to God-ward has spread abroad; so that we need not speak anything. For they shew of us what manner of entering we had unto you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God," 1 Thessalonians 1:8-9. Paul continued,

2. Further, "I am glad therefore on your behalf: I rejoice, therefore, concerning you," Romans 16:19b. See also 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10. To Ephesus, another church planted by Paul.

a. He penned: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you *the spirit of wisdom and revelation* in the knowledge of Him (Christ Jesus)," Ephesians 1:15-17.

b. To Colossae, he inscribed: "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you since we heard of *your faith* in Christ Jesus and *the love* which you have for all the saints. For the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the gospel's truth. Which is come unto you...As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ, declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in *all wisdom and spiritual understanding*," Colossians 1:3-9. [Text shortened for brevity]. Let me present this observation of the church in Rome. They were void of, "spiritual gifts." Paul desired to go to Rome so that he might impart these gifts. Please observe,

c. He wrote: "To all that be in Rome:"

1) First, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all...For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers," Romans 1:8-9. [Text shortened for brevity]. He wrote further,

2) Second, "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you," Romans 1:10.

3) Third, "For I long to see you, that *I may impart* unto you *some spiritual gifts* (by my laying on of hands), to the end you may be established. That is that I may be comforted with you by the mutual faith of you and me," Romans 1:11-12.

OBSERVATION: An apostle could not have established this assembly. Why, Brother Freeman? It was void of "spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit," Hebrews 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8. More than likely, some Jews or proselytes of Rome converted on Pentecost, Acts 2:5; Acts 2:10: and Acts 2:37-41. Some loving brothers may have founded the congregation in Rome. Peter did not establish this work either! Amen.

a) However, these saints stood "shoulder to shoulder" to all the other congregations, having been established by apostles and granted spiritual gifts through the "laying on of hands," Acts 19:1-7.

b) As Rome existed without them, so do we today. God has granted us the Divine Revelation and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

c) We no longer require such "spiritual gifts;" we need only follow the Word of God, which replaced "that which was, in part": the spiritual gifts to help guide and direct the New Testament Church! See 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

NOTE: Download our Lesson "When That Which Is Perfect Comes" by Ron Freeman, Evangelist from SermonCentral.com. It explains the conclusion of such gifts to the church of Christ. Paul continued,

4) Fourth, "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles," Romans 1:13. See also Romans 1:14-17. Paul desired to visit the church in Rome to help fully establish them in Christ. We know he visited and taught them as a prisoner of Rome! Moving to our conclusion. He wrote,

3. Finally, I wish you wise to be to (*the*) goodness and simple to evil. The apostle wished them to be *wise* to the good and *simple* to all evil things. Paul desired them,

a. One, to be wise to *the good*. Good in Gr., is *agathós*, which is a primary word; "good" (in any sense, often as noun): — benefit, good (-s, things), well. Seek good unto all. This is the real meaning of "*agapaō*," which means *seeking the highest good* for all. First for yourself, and then for your neighbor, Matthew 22:37-40. Then,

b. Two, to be *simple* (innocent and harmless) to all evil. We learned earlier that in Gr., the word for simple in Romans 16:19 is "*akeraiosá*" and rightly translated as "innocent and harmless." We also saw

that “akeraios” is translated as “harmless” in Matthew 10:16 and Philippians 2:15. Their Greek Parsing codes are G185, A-NPM, as in Romans 16:19, G185, and A-APM.

NOTE: Recall that A-NPM is Adjective-Nominative Plural Masculine, and A-APM is Adjective-Accusative Plural Masculine.

c. This author believes the Greek word “áakos” and its translation “simple” are probable errors in this text. Perhaps a better translation for “simple” in Romans 16:18 could have been from the Gr., word “kakos,” which means “evil, wicked, or harmful.” Its Greek Parsing code is G-2556, A-ASN. In like manner, the Greek word “ponēria,” translated as “iniquities” in Acts 3:26, could have been translated as “wickedness” and coded G4189, N-GPF, as in the other *six occurrences* of this word in the New Testament.

NOTE: N-GPF means noun Genitive Plural Feminine. I’m unsure why it was translated as “iniquities” when the other occurrences were translated as “wickedness.” In like manner,

OBSERVATION: Paul uses the same word, “kakos,” or evil, coded G-2556, A-ASN, in four other occurrences in his Letter to the Romans. This author believes that in Romans 16:18, the word “simple” is a probable error and could also be “evil” and coded G-2556, A-ASN. I have discussed this earlier in the dissertation. I humbly remind you again,

[I speak not from secular education in the Greek language or the translation process. But from 60 years of reading, studying, teaching, and preaching the word of God.] Beloved in the Lord,

d. I trust you found comfort and encouragement in Paul’s Solemn Plea to Rome. Let’s also make this our plea to all the churches of Christ everywhere! Amen. I truly appreciate your patience. Here’s what we discussed in this dissertation,

CONCLUSION

A. Outline.

1. Causes Divisions and Offenses
2. Serves not the Lord Jesus Christ
3. Deceives the Hearts of the Simple

B. Summarize Main Points

1. First, we considered Paul's concern regarding those who cause divisions and offenses in the body of Christ. The apostle begins this solemn plea with his softest word: “Brethren, I beseech you, not command you.” We, like Paul, understood that though we have the authority to demand, it serves best when we humbly ask, pray, or beg in the “name of Jesus Christ” for the saints to be persuaded rather than directed. Some military men, like myself, might have struggled with this after giving and receiving “orders” for decades. It took my wife to help me in this area of communication. Paul’s solemn plea included two things: 1) to mark them and 2) to turn away from them: “who cause divisions and offenses within the body of Christ,” Romans 16:17.

2. Second, we discussed that those who now trouble the church serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their (own) bellies. They were troubling the church with divisions and offenses. We learned that Paul spoke of the Jewish fathers and those of the circumcision. They were teaching the Gentiles that they could not be part of the church family without first obeying the Law and being circumcised to become proselytes of Judaism. They were messengers of the evil one and were not the servants of the Lord but “greedy for filthy lucre,” Titus 1:11-12. Finally, he asked the church to pray that the saints of Jerusalem and Judaea might accept his work in delivering the money from the Gentile churches and that he could be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.

3. Last, we investigated what the apostle meant when he wrote: “And by kind speaking and praise deceive the hearts of the innocent,” Romans 16:18b. This sentence outlines the hearts and minds of those who not only preach and teach something other than sound doctrine. But it also includes the

hearts and minds of those who will be “beguiled and wholly deceived” by their good words and fair speeches. Paul refers to them as “the innocent and deceived” because they were ignorant and unlearned regarding the “faith of the gospel” and are deceived, and their destruction and damnation are standing at the door. Paul warned them and us that: “Every sin and disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward,” Hebrews 2:1-2. God’s judgment will be fair and final!

C. Invitation. Present God’s pattern of conversion. Jesus said: “Come unto me all ye that labor,” Matthew 11:28-30. [Explain the POC, i.e., hearing and believing the gospel; repentance of all past sins, Luke 24:44-47; confessing faith in Christ, as the Son of God, Matthew 10:32-33; and then, by obeying the gospel, Romans 10:16-18; Romans 6:17-18; that is to: “repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,” Acts 2:38; Acts 5:31-32; Ephesians 1:13-14].

D. Exhortation. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,” Jeremiah 8:20.

E. Motivation. Do as Peter directed: “Save thyself,” Acts 2:40; Acts 2:36-39; Acts 2:41.

Consultations and Commendations

I submit this verse unto you that I may: “Render therefore to all their dues: tributes to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and honor to whom honor, (is due),” Romans 13:7. I acknowledge my consultation with these distinguished authors in this lesson.

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Author's Information

Ron Freeman, Evangelist
Worldwide Ministry Church of Christ.org. ™
Post Office Box 1112
Anniston, AL 36202

Communications and Websites

Email: wwmcoc@earthlink.net
Textual Sermon: www.SermonCentral.com
Link: <https://www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/ron-freeman-evangelist-sermons-129301>
Audio Sermon: www.Archive.org
Link: <https://archive.org/search?query=Ron+Freeman%2C+Evangelist>

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